

# Surviving A Layoff

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6 million copies sold

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## It's not your fault.

Losing your job through a layoff is not your fault. Don't confuse a layoff with a firing—they are two different things.

### **So, what did I do wrong—why are they letting me go?**

You didn't do anything wrong. Don't confuse a layoff with a firing. Firings remove people. Layoffs remove positions.

People who are fired usually did something to deserve losing their job— theft, chronic absenteeism, or refusing to do the work.

People who are laid off did nothing wrong. Instead, their position or job was closed—usually, because there wasn't enough work, or because the company needs to rearrange positions to become more competitive.

### **I handled the news badly.**

Everybody takes the news differently. Some clam up and say nothing.

Some plead and beg. Some sob and cry. Some get angry and say things they later regret. Some are glad and can't wait to start something new.

The person who told you that you were being laid off is a professional. He or she knows that losing a job is traumatic and people react emotionally, not rationally. They try not to take your reaction personally.

After a week or so, if you still feel guilty about how you reacted when the manager gave you the news, consider sending her a short note.

Simply say that you were surprised by the news and that you became emotional. Say that you regret taking out your feelings on her.

A short, hand-written apology says more about your character than all the tears and cursing of that emotionally-charged meeting.

# 151 Thousand

**You are not alone. Since 2002 there have been 1,400 major layoffs affecting 151,000 people every month.**  
—U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

## How am I going to tell my family?

Say it clearly. Try not to be dramatic or timid.

You might say, "I have sad news about my job. I've been laid off. The layoff is effective today and the decision is final."

Stress that you were laid off, not fired, and that the decision is final.

Layoffs are emotional and you'll want to talk about it. So, explain what happened—who laid you off, where they did it, what they said, how they said it, how you felt, and what you said to them.

Mention the names of the other people who were laid off with you, as well as those who were not, and how everyone felt.

Introduce some hope. Tell your family that most people find new jobs in a month or two and many find jobs that pay more money.

Plus, if you're burnt out by the kind of work you do, now is a great time to look into a new career.

## How am I going to make ends meet?

Try not to worry about your finances today. Put it off for a day or two. Later, we'll show you how to handle your bills until you get on your feet again.

## I'm a wreck over this.

Each of us lives in a "comfort zone." A comfort zone is an emotional place. It's a place where your work, your coworkers, and the demands of your job are routine and comfortable.

Suddenly, your "comfort zone" has been smashed and you can't fix it. You're in a mild state of shock.

As you can see from the chart on the right, losing your job is stressful. It's right up there with learning that you have a serious illness.

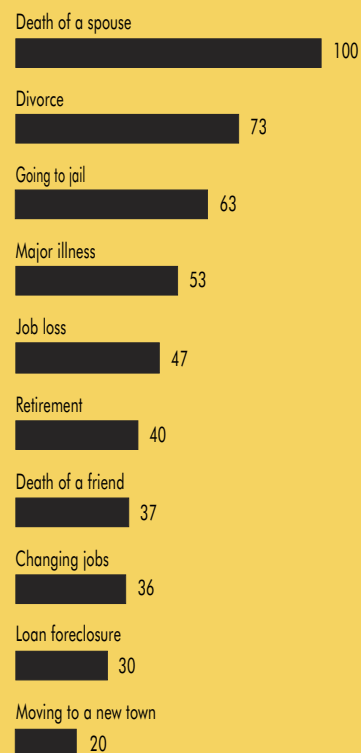
Most of us will need a few weeks to heal and get back on our feet. Those who were deeply wounded by the layoff, might need a few months to heal.

During this healing time, each of us will experience four different emotions. Turn the page—we need to talk about them.

## COMPARING LIFE'S MAJOR STRESSES

If losing your spouse is the greatest stress, how do other stressful situations compare?

Here's a partial list:



Source: *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*